





3294E

# How to turn your community green

## A guide on how to apply for funding for your Green Communities Initiative plan



ONTARIO'S GREEN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE is the first of its kind in North America to offer an integrated community-based approach to increasing energy and water efficiency, reducing waste and preventing pollution. Besides helping to create greener communities, the program is stimulating local economies, generating jobs and contributing to the growth of Ontario's green industries.

One distinctive feature of the Green Communities Initiative is that it encourages community-wide action based on strategic plans. Participating communities set their own goals and choose their own methods for achieving them. This leads to self-sustaining projects that continue on long after the initial government involvement.

Under the program, the Ministry of Environment and Energy offers financial support to broadly-based community groups in two steps: to develop strategic plans and to implement the projects. This fact sheet describes what a community group needs to do to apply for funding for a strategic plan.

### Getting started

One of the first steps you need to take is to develop a strategic plan. It will describe where your community is now, where you want it to be in the future and the steps you must take to go from here to there.

Your plan needs to include energy and water efficiency, solid waste reduction and pollution prevention projects. And it should demonstrate how these projects fit together so you do not solve one environmental problem by creating another.

#### \* *An example of an integrated project*

*A project to delay a proposed expansion of the local sewage or water treatment plants might include installing faucet aerators as well as water-saving toilets and showerheads in local households.*

*You, as a householder, would benefit because such a project would help to cut your gas or electricity bills - as you would use less hot water. Your community would benefit for two reasons.*

*First, the project would help to reduce the pressure on your water and sewage treatment plants which, in turn, would help to increase their lifespans. And second, the project would help to boost local sales of water-efficient fixtures and to create jobs for local contractors.*

### Essential steps - get your team together

Before you apply for funding you need to have an advisory or steering committee. It will be responsible for the planning process. Your committee will provide direction, oversee the preparation of the community profile and outline the plans of action.

Typically, advisory committees have 12 to 20 members who represent organizations involved in economic development and environmental, energy or water projects in your community. These organizations include local utilities, businesses, industries, media and government as well as service clubs, social service agencies and school boards and environmental, labor, neighborhood, church and seniors groups.

You also need to have a contractual partner. It must be incorporated - preferably as a non-profit organization - and legally capable of entering into a contract with the Ministry of Environment and Energy. Your contractual partner may be your municipality, local Chamber of Commerce or public utility, economic development corporation or a non-profit organization. The partner must be a member of the advisory or steering committee and be willing to manage the finances of the planning project.

The contractual partner will sign the application form for funding to develop a strategic plan.

#### \* *Community support is essential*

*Broad community support and participation is critical to the success of the strategic planning process. Such support and participation improves the quality of the decisions made about the community's future, strengthens the level of*





